

Chinese Folk Music Literacy: A Case Study of Ebian Yi Wedding Songs

Lin Yang*, Pitsanu Boonsrianan, Khomkrich Karin

College of Music, Mahasarakham University, Thailand

Corresponding author: Lin Yang, E-mail: linyang.msu@gmail.com

ARTICLE INFO

Article history

Received: November 18, 2024

Accepted: February 12, 2025

Published: March 31, 2025

Volume: 13 Issue: 2

Conflicts of interest: None

Funding: None

ABSTRACT

Ebian Yi wedding songs are essential to the Yi ethnic group's musical and cultural heritage, and they are traditionally performed during wedding ceremonies in Ebian Yi Autonomous County, Sichuan Province, China. This study examines the role of Ebian Yi wedding songs in promoting Chinese folk music literacy and the obstacles affecting their sustainability. Employing a qualitative ethnographic approach, fieldwork was conducted in Ebian Yi Autonomous County, where participant observation and in-depth interviews were conducted with seven key informants, including cultural transmitters, music educators, and community members. Data were analyzed using thematic analysis, focusing on intergenerational knowledge transfer, community participation, and integration into educational programs. The findings reveal that while these wedding songs are crucial for maintaining folk music literacy, factors such as the decline in traditional performers, reduced fluency in the Yi language, and modern wedding practices hinder their continuity. The study suggests implementing mentorship programs, incorporating traditional music into formal education, and leveraging digital platforms for preservation. These strategies can help sustain the transmission of Ebian Yi wedding songs and ensure that future generations maintain their cultural heritage.

Key words: Ebian Yi Wedding Songs, Folk Music Literacy, Cultural Transmission, Music Education, Heritage Preservation

INTRODUCTION

Chinese folk music has long been a crucial component of the nation's cultural heritage, serving as a vehicle for storytelling, education, and community bonding. Folk music traditions across China's diverse ethnic groups reflect various communities' history, values, and social customs. Among them, the wedding songs of the Ebian Yi people in Sichuan Province hold a special place, encapsulating centuries of musical expression and cultural transmission (Ho, 2018; Jian et al., 2024; Luo et al., 2020). These songs are performed during wedding ceremonies to convey blessings, express emotions, and strengthen social cohesion. More than just a form of entertainment, they function as oral records of historical narratives and social customs, reinforcing cultural identity among the Yi people. However, the ability to understand and engage with this music - folk music literacy is rapidly declining due to social and economic changes. Folk music literacy encompasses the ability to sing and perform traditional songs and a deeper understanding of their linguistic, historical, and musical significance (Jiayang Li & Su, 2024; Wang & Thotham, 2024). As modernization reshapes cultural practices, efforts to sustain traditional music literacy become increasingly vital.

Despite the cultural richness of Ebian Yi wedding songs, their transmission is facing severe challenges. The impact

of globalization and urbanization has led to the widespread adoption of mainstream musical genres, reducing interest in traditional folk music. Younger generations are more inclined toward contemporary Chinese pop music, leading to a growing disconnect between them and their ancestral musical heritage. Additionally, shifts in wedding practices, including the preference for modern-style celebrations, have resulted in a decline in traditional wedding songs (Ho, 2023; Song, 2024; Zhang & Negus, 2020). Compounding this issue is the loss of the Yi language among younger community members, making it increasingly difficult for them to comprehend the meanings embedded within the wedding songs. Many traditional song performers, often elderly community members, are passing away, and without systematic preservation efforts, much of their knowledge risks being lost. These factors contribute to the decline of folk music literacy, raising concerns about the sustainability of Ebian Yi wedding music in contemporary society (Greene, 2023; Norton & Matsumoto, 2018; Tang, 2021). Without intervention, a critical aspect of the Yi people's intangible cultural heritage may disappear.

Given these challenges, this study aims to examine the role of Ebian Yi wedding songs in promoting Chinese folk music literacy. It seeks to understand how these wedding songs transmit musical knowledge and cultural heritage among

the Yi community. The research explores the functions of wedding songs in fostering literacy in traditional folk music, the existing challenges in their preservation, and the potential strategies for ensuring their continued relevance (Gong et al., 2024; Shun & Boonsrianun, 2023; Tang & Sornyai, 2023; Wu & Chuangprakhon, 2024). This study will provide an in-depth analysis of how Ebian Yi wedding songs serve as tools for cultural education and how they can be integrated into modern educational frameworks. Furthermore, it will investigate the role of government policies, community efforts, and digital technology in revitalizing folk music literacy. Through qualitative research, including interviews with cultural practitioners, observations of wedding ceremonies, and analysis of archival records, this study will offer insights into the mechanisms of folk music transmission within the Yi community.

Understanding the role of Ebian Yi wedding songs in folk music literacy is significant for several reasons. First, it contributes to the broader discussion on preserving intangible cultural heritage, offering practical insights into sustaining endangered musical traditions. Second, it highlights the importance of folk music as a medium for intergenerational learning and cultural continuity. By documenting the transmission processes and challenges the Yi community faces, this study can inform policymakers, educators, and cultural institutions on effective ways to integrate traditional music into contemporary cultural and educational settings (Chan, 2018; Hiswara et al., 2023; Howard, 2022; Zhang & Wu, 2023). Additionally, it provides a framework for applying preservation strategies similar to other ethnic music traditions in China and beyond. Finally, this research underscores the importance of cultural diversity in shaping national identity, advocating for the recognition of folk music literacy as a valuable educational and artistic pursuit. Through this study, we aim to contribute to ongoing efforts in cultural preservation, ensuring that Ebian Yi wedding songs continue to be appreciated and understood by future generations.

Research Question

- How do Ebian Yi wedding songs contribute to the promotion and preservation of Chinese folk music literacy in contemporary society?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Folk music literacy extends beyond the ability to perform traditional songs; it involves a deep comprehension of cultural heritage, oral traditions, historical contexts, and linguistic elements embedded within music. For the Yi people of Ebian, wedding songs are vital for transmitting cultural knowledge, reinforcing social identity, intergenerational learning, and community cohesion. However, the growing influence of globalization, urbanization, and digital media has led to a decline in traditional music practices, posing challenges to folk music literacy. This literature review explores three key aspects related to the research.

Chinese Folk Music Literacy

Chinese folk music literacy encompasses understanding, interpreting, and performing traditional music within a cultural framework. Unlike Western musical literacy, which emphasizes formal notation and institutionalized training, Chinese folk music literacy is rooted in oral transmission and contextual learning. It is traditionally linked to social rituals, religious practices, and seasonal celebrations, emphasizing regional stylistic variations, dialects, and symbolic storytelling.

Among the Yi ethnic group in Ebian, folk music literacy is deeply intertwined with language proficiency, historical consciousness, and cultural preservation. Wedding songs, in particular, serve as repositories of ethical teachings, community values, and aesthetic traditions. However, contemporary sociocultural shifts have necessitated new approaches to preservation. Digital documentation, cultural tourism, and integration into school curricula have emerged as key strategies to sustain folk music literacy amid rapid societal transformation (Howard, 2018; Jirajarupat & Yinghua, 2023; Yu & Leung, 2019). Examining Ebian Yi wedding songs provides insight into their contribution to the evolving landscape of Chinese folk music literacy.

Ebian Yi Wedding Songs as a form of Cultural Expression

Ebian Yi wedding songs are a significant cultural expression and a means of passing down traditions. They accompany various stages of the wedding process, including the bride's departure, the groom's welcome, and marital blessings. These songs encapsulate customs and emotions surrounding Yi matrimonial traditions through distinctive melodies, poetic lyrics, and rhythmic patterns. They also play an educational role within the Yi community, reinforcing moral teachings about love, family unity, and social responsibilities. Some songs emphasize virtues like loyalty and respect for elders.

Ebian Yi wedding songs also incorporate stylistic elements unique to the Yi ethnic group, distinguishing them from mainstream Chinese folk music traditions. However, these songs are increasingly at risk of being forgotten due to the rise of modern wedding customs and shifting musical preferences. Many contemporary wedding ceremonies favor instrumental recordings or popular music instead of live performances of traditional wedding songs, reducing opportunities for oral transmission. This shift highlights the need to preserve these songs as a vital part of folk music literacy and adapt to modern contexts while maintaining their cultural essence (Tian & Woramitmitree, 2023; Wang, 2023; Wu & Xu, 2023; Zeng, 2024).

Challenges in Folk Music Literacy and Transmission

The transmission of Ebian Yi wedding songs faces several challenges, including a decline in traditional performers, language decline, urban migration, and mainstream media influence. Elders with extensive knowledge of wedding songs

cannot pass their expertise to younger generations due to shifting cultural priorities and a lack of structured educational support. Additionally, cultural shifts among younger Yi generations have decreased motivation to engage with traditional music, further limiting transmission opportunities.

Younger Yi people are more proficient in Mandarin than Yi, affecting their ability to appreciate the lyrical depth of traditional songs. Urban migration and mainstream media have also shifted cultural preferences away from traditional folk music, contributing to a decline in active participation. Furthermore, limited access to traditional music education in urban schools has weakened cultural literacy among younger members of the Yi community.

To address these issues, several targeted initiatives have been implemented. Government-funded folk music programs, digital archiving projects, cultural festivals, and tourism programs have been introduced to integrate traditional music into local school curricula and revitalize interest in Yi wedding music. In addition, contemporary adaptations of wedding songs in fusion genres have emerged as an alternative means of keeping traditional music relevant in modern society (Erjian & Chuangprakhon, 2023; Prest & Goble, 2021; Yi & Sondhiratna, 2024).

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative ethnographic approach to examine the role of Ebian Yi wedding songs in promoting Chinese folk music literacy. The research integrates fieldwork, interviews, and document analysis to capture the lived experiences and cultural significance of wedding songs within the Yi community (Mohajan, 2018; Tracy, 2024; Wang et al., 2025). By analyzing the perspectives of cultural transmitters, local government officials, educators, and community members, the study seeks to understand how these traditional songs contribute to preserving and promoting folk music literacy in contemporary society. The research methodology follows a structured process involving the identification of key informants, data collection, and thematic analysis.

Research Site

The research was conducted in Ebian Yi Autonomous County, Sichuan Province, China. This region was selected due to its rich musical heritage and active traditional wedding practices, making it an ideal location for studying folk music literacy within real-life cultural contexts. The county is known for its intangible cultural heritage preservation programs, where both government and local communities have taken significant steps to document and sustain traditional Yi wedding songs. These ceremonies, performed as oral traditions, continue to play a central role in cultural transmission despite modern societal changes, as shown in Table 1.

Key Informants

The study involved seven key informants selected through purposive sampling to ensure diverse perspectives on the literacy and transmission of Ebian Yi wedding songs.

These informants represent a broad spectrum of individuals engaged in the preservation, education, and cultural practice of Yi wedding music. The sample consists of two scholar informants, three general informants, and two casual informants, each contributing unique insights into the role of wedding songs in fostering folk music literacy. Their collective experiences provide a holistic understanding of the impact of Ebian Yi wedding songs on education, cultural identity, and transmission practices, as shown in Table 2.

Data Collection

The study used participant observation, semi-structured interviews, and archival research to analyze the role of Ebian Yi wedding songs in promoting folk music literacy. The researchers observed and documented performances of wedding songs at three traditional Yi wedding ceremonies, performance context, and audience engagement. They also conducted seven in-depth interviews with key informants to explore their experiences with folk music literacy, transmission, and preservation challenges. Combining these methods ensured a well-rounded analysis, contextually validating findings across multiple sources.

Data Analysis

The study used thematic analysis to identify patterns in the transmission, challenges, and preservation strategies of Ebian Yi wedding songs. Interview transcripts, observation notes, and archival records were systematically coded and categorized. The themes identified were music education,

Table 1. Research site characteristics

Location	Cultural focus	Rationale for selection
Ebian Yi Autonomous County, Sichuan Province, China	Traditional Yi wedding songs and ceremonies	Region with strong cultural identity and active folk music traditions
Home to a significant Yi population	Focus on oral transmission and folk music literacy	Site of cultural preservation efforts by government and local communities

Table 2. Profile of key informants

Key informants	Role in cultural transmission
Two scholar informants	Experts in ethnomusicology and cultural preservation, contributing academic perspectives on folk music literacy
Three general informants	Individuals actively engaged in wedding song performance and local cultural events, providing firsthand experience in music transmission
Two casual informants	Community members with informal yet significant roles in wedding ceremonies, offering insights into lived experiences and cultural traditions

cultural identity, and preservation strategies. The findings were then synthesized to answer the research question and provide insights into the role of wedding songs in folk music literacy. This approach allowed for a structured examination of Ebian Yi wedding songs' contribution to cultural preservation and literacy education.

RESULTS

The findings of this study highlight the crucial role of Ebian Yi wedding songs in fostering folk music literacy while identifying the challenges that hinder their preservation and transmission. These wedding songs are a cultural repository, passing down musical knowledge, traditions, and social values across generations. However, external influences such as modernization, language erosion, and the decline of traditional performers pose significant threats to their continued transmission. This section presents the key findings under two main themes: the role of Ebian Yi wedding songs in folk music literacy and the challenges in preserving these traditional songs.

Role of Ebian Yi Wedding Songs in Folk Music Literacy

The findings of this study reveal that Ebian Yi wedding songs play a crucial role in fostering folk music literacy within the community. Literacy in folk music extends beyond reading and writing; it encompasses the ability to understand, interpret, and perform traditional music within its cultural and historical context. Ebian Yi wedding songs are a vital educational tool that transmits musical skills, linguistic elements, and cultural knowledge, strengthening the connection between the Yi people and their heritage. Through interviews with cultural transmitters, educators, and community elders, three key areas emerged in which wedding songs contribute to folk music literacy: intergenerational knowledge transfer, community participation and identity formation, and integration into educational programs.

Intergenerational knowledge transfer

Ebian Yi wedding songs serve as a primary medium of oral transmission, allowing elders to pass down musical knowledge, traditions, and storytelling elements to younger generations. Informants emphasized that literacy in folk music is largely acquired through listening, imitation, and participation rather than formal education. A cultural transmitter, one of the key informants, shared:

"I learned the wedding songs from my grandmother. She would sing during family gatherings, and I gradually memorized the melodies and lyrics. This is how we have always learned music—by listening and repeating."

This method of oral learning ensures that musical and cultural elements remain intact while evolving with each new generation. However, informants noted that younger Yi individuals are becoming less familiar with traditional wedding songs due to increased exposure to mainstream music and reduced engagement in community traditions.

In Figure 1, the Bride Escort Ceremony, a crucial ritual in Yi weddings, illustrates the active role of wedding songs in traditional marriage customs. During this ceremony, elders and musicians lead the wedding procession while singing traditional songs, reinforcing music literacy among younger participants who observe and gradually internalize these songs. The integration of song and ceremony helps preserve the music and the historical and social meanings embedded within the lyrics.

Community participation and identity formation

Ebian Yi wedding songs serve as more than entertainment; they foster community participation and reinforce cultural identity. Folk music literacy is deeply intertwined with the ability to engage with music in a social context. Community-wide participation in wedding songs creates a shared cultural experience, strengthening a collective musical identity. One of the community elders interviewed stated:

"At every wedding, everyone joins in the singing. It is not just about the newlyweds—it is about the community coming together to celebrate and pass down our traditions."

The involvement of multiple generations in wedding performances enhances musical literacy by ensuring that the knowledge of these songs remains a living tradition rather than a historical artifact. Young participants learn the rhythmic patterns, call-and-response structures, and lyrical variations by singing with experienced performers. This participatory approach aligns with folk music literacy development, where individuals gain cultural competence through immersion and practice.

However, modern wedding trends, which prioritize contemporary music over traditional performances, challenge the role of wedding songs in reinforcing identity. Informants noted that many urbanized Yi families opt for recorded popular music at their wedding receptions, reducing opportunities for folk music literacy to develop naturally within the community setting.

Integration into educational programs

Recognizing the decline in traditional music literacy, recent initiatives have sought to integrate Ebian Yi wedding songs into school curricula and extracurricular activities. Local educators and cultural officials have implemented folk music



Figure 1. The Bride Escort Ceremony
Source: Ying Ren, from fieldwork in 2024

education programs to teach students about Yi musical traditions. A music educator from the study explained:

“We started incorporating Yi wedding songs into the school music curriculum to ensure that students not only hear these songs at weddings but also understand their structure and meaning.”

Through school-based folk music literacy programs, students are introduced to Yi folk notation, vocal techniques, and performance contexts, enabling them to engage with traditional music in a structured environment. These programs bridge formal education and oral transmission, ensuring that even students who may not regularly attend Yi weddings can still develop musical literacy in their cultural heritage.

One key initiative involves collaboration between cultural centers and schools to conduct practical workshops and performances. These activities help preserve wedding songs and increase student engagement with their musical traditions. Teachers have reported that students develop a greater sense of cultural pride when exposed to wedding music as an academic subject rather than merely a background element in ceremonies.

Challenges in Preserving Wedding Songs

Despite their significant role in promoting folk music literacy, the transmission of Ebian Yi wedding songs faces several pressing challenges. The decline in traditional performers, language erosion, and modernization of wedding customs threaten the continuity of this oral tradition, making it increasingly difficult for younger generations to engage with and develop literacy in Yi folk music. These challenges have been observed through fieldwork, informant interviews, and educational initiatives, revealing the causes and potential solutions to this decline.

Decline in traditional performers

One of the most immediate concerns for folk music literacy is the declining number of skilled performers who can accurately teach, interpret, and transmit wedding songs. As elder singers age, fewer young people are stepping forward to learn these traditional songs, reducing the number of knowledgeable cultural transmitters. A cultural transmitter and performer interviewed expressed concern over this issue:

“When I was young, we learned songs naturally from our elders. But now, younger generations are more interested in modern music, and few are willing to dedicate the time needed to master traditional songs.”

Without active participation, folk music literacy in wedding songs diminishes as younger generations become detached from the traditions and meanings. The lack of structured mentorship or apprenticeship programs further exacerbates the problem, as informal oral transmission remains the primary learning method.

Figure 2, which depicts a music class at Ebian Middle School, highlights one approach to addressing this issue. Integrating folk music literacy into formal education counters the decline in traditional performers by introducing

students to Yi musical traditions in a structured environment. However, educators noted that students still struggle with fully grasping the meaning and proper execution of these songs, as the classroom setting cannot fully replicate the immersive experience of a traditional wedding performance.

Language erosion

A fundamental component of folk music literacy is understanding the linguistic and cultural context in which traditional music is performed. Ebian Yi wedding songs are deeply rooted in the Yi language, using poetic lyrics to convey blessings, emotions, and cultural narratives. However, the gradual decline in Yi language use has significantly impacted the ability of younger generations to comprehend and perform these songs accurately. An educator working on folk music literacy programs in schools explained:

“Many students can sing the melodies, but they don’t fully understand the meaning of the lyrics because they don’t speak Yi fluently at home. This affects their ability to perform the songs with the correct expressions and emotions.”

This linguistic disconnection weakens the depth of folk music literacy, as the ability to interpret and express traditional wedding songs is an essential component of musical education and cultural preservation. Figure 3, which shows the Ayi Mengge Children’s Day event, illustrates an effort to revitalize language use and cultural engagement among young Yi students. Events like these encourage language learning through interactive activities, helping to reinforce



Figure 2. Music class at Ebian Middle School



Figure 3. The Ayi Mengge Children’s Day event

Yi music literacy by strengthening linguistic competency. However, without consistent exposure to the Yi language at home and in the community, these efforts remain limited in their long-term impact.

Modernization and changing wedding practices

Another major challenge to preserving Ebian Yi wedding songs is the impact of modern wedding trends, which often replace traditional performances with contemporary music or simplified ceremonies. As weddings become more influenced by urban customs, the role of folk music literacy in ceremonial settings diminishes. A community elder shared their observation on this shift:

“Before, wedding ceremonies lasted for days, and music played a key role in every event stage. Now, many families prefer shorter celebrations with recorded music, reducing the need for live performances of wedding songs.”

This shift reduces opportunities for younger generations to develop a natural literacy in wedding music, as they are no longer immersed in traditional performances. Additionally, the commercialization of weddings has increased demand for modern musical styles, pushing Ebian Yi wedding songs to the margins of the celebratory process.

Figure 4, from the Shuxiang Ebian National Reading Event, highlights a strategy to counteract this challenge by promoting folk music literacy through public performances and educational initiatives. These efforts aim to reconnect the younger generation with their cultural heritage, demonstrating that wedding music remains relevant in contemporary society. However, informants emphasized that true preservation efforts must also include direct participation in actual wedding ceremonies rather than limiting music literacy to performance venues outside traditional contexts.

Preserving Ebian Yi’s wedding songs is complex due to cultural shifts, language use, and generational engagement. A combination of approaches is needed to address these challenges, including revitalizing oral transmission through mentorship programs, enhancing language preservation efforts, and integrating traditional music into modern wedding practices. Without these efforts, the folk music literacy of Ebian Yi wedding songs could be permanently diminished, emphasizing the need for continued cultural education and active transmission.



Figure 4. The Shuxiang Ebian National Reading Event

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The findings of this study highlight the significant role that Ebian Yi wedding songs play in fostering Chinese folk music literacy. These traditional songs serve as a cultural repository, preserving musical knowledge, language, and social customs while acting as an educational tool for younger generations. The study confirms that folk music literacy extends beyond performance skills, including cultural comprehension and historical awareness (Howard, 2018; Jiayang Li & Su, 2024). However, despite their importance, Ebian Yi wedding songs face several challenges that hinder their transmission and preservation, including the decline of traditional performers, language erosion, and modernization of wedding customs. These findings are consistent with previous research on the decline of Indigenous music literacy due to globalization and changing cultural practices (Norton & Matsumoto, 2018; Tang, 2021).

A key contribution of this study is its confirmation that intergenerational knowledge transfer remains the primary mechanism through which folk music literacy is sustained among the Yi people. Many cultural transmitters interviewed emphasized that young learners acquire wedding songs through oral tradition rather than formalized music education. This finding aligns with Howard’s (2022) argument that oral traditions are critical pathways for transmitting intangible cultural heritage. However, the study also reveals that younger generations are increasingly disengaged from traditional wedding songs due to their preference for contemporary musical genres. This is consistent with Zhang and Negus (2020), who noted that the rising influence of pop culture has led to the marginalization of traditional folk music among younger audiences.

Additionally, this study finds that community participation is essential in reinforcing musical literacy and cultural identity. Wedding songs are not simply performance pieces but collective expressions of social unity that strengthen the bonds within the Yi community. This supports Chan’s (2018) argument that folk music is integral to cultural sustainability, serving as a medium for social cohesion and education. However, institutionalizing folk music education may present a challenge. By removing wedding songs from their natural communal context and placing them in educational settings, there is a risk of losing the authenticity and experiential nature of the music. The increasing formalization of folk traditions may also lead to their commercialization, reducing the cultural and emotional depth they carry. This tension highlights the need to balance educational efforts with preserving the organic learning environment found in community settings.

Moreover, educational programs, while promising, could potentially dilute the very essence of these songs as they are adapted into school curricula. If not handled carefully, attempting to institutionalize and mainstream these songs for educational purposes may inadvertently shift them from their authentic roots to fit academic frameworks. Nevertheless, the study also identifies a decline in active community participation, which is exacerbated by modern wedding trends that favor recorded music over live performances. This observation

aligns with Greene (2023), who reported that technological changes and the commercialization of ceremonies have weakened traditional music engagement.

One of the most pressing challenges identified in this study is language erosion, which directly impacts the ability of younger Yi individuals to engage with traditional wedding songs. Many informants noted that the decreasing fluency in the Yi language among younger generations makes it difficult to comprehend song lyrics, ultimately reducing their motivation to learn and perform these songs. This finding supports the arguments of Prest and Goble (2021), who emphasize that linguistic competence is a crucial component of music literacy and that language loss can have severe implications for the sustainability of folk traditions. Similar concerns were raised by Yi and Sondhiratna (2024), who highlighted that indigenous music education must include language preservation strategies to ensure that younger generations can fully engage with traditional songs.

Despite these challenges, the potential for integrating Ebian Yi wedding songs into national music education policies could provide a viable solution. By incorporating these songs into formal educational frameworks, there is an opportunity to preserve and promote them on a larger scale. However, the effectiveness of these policies will depend on their ability to preserve the integrity of the songs while addressing the challenges of commercialization and institutionalization. Educational initiatives incorporating Ebian Yi wedding songs into school curricula show promise in revitalizing folk music literacy. Music educators interviewed in this study reported positive outcomes from introducing Yi wedding songs into structured learning environments. This finding aligns with Yu and Leung (2019), who argue that integrating traditional folk music into school programs can enhance students' appreciation and understanding of their cultural heritage. However, while classroom-based learning provides an alternative pathway for transmission, it does not fully replicate the immersive experience of community-led music traditions. Similar concerns were raised by Wang et al. (2025), who noted that institutionalized music education must complement, rather than replace, organic community-based learning processes.

This study provides valuable insights into the role of Ebian Yi wedding songs in promoting Chinese folk music literacy and the challenges that threaten their continued transmission. The findings confirm that these wedding songs serve as essential tools for cultural education, reinforcing intergenerational knowledge transfer, community identity, and linguistic preservation. However, the study also highlights the significant threats of modernization, language erosion, and declining participation in traditional wedding practices. Without active intervention, the literacy and preservation of Ebian Yi's wedding songs risk being permanently diminished.

To address these challenges, several key recommendations emerge. First, community-driven mentorship programs should be established to support the transmission of traditional wedding songs to younger generations. These programs should involve elder cultural transmitters who can

provide direct instruction and foster oral learning environments. Second, language revitalization efforts should be integrated into folk music education to ensure students learn to sing traditional songs and understand their linguistic and poetic meanings. Third, cultural policies should incentivize the use of traditional wedding songs in modern wedding ceremonies (e.g., through government-supported cultural events and financial subsidies for traditional performers). Finally, digital archiving and technological innovations should be leveraged to document and disseminate Ebian Yi's wedding songs through accessible online platforms, ensuring broader reach and long-term preservation.

Future research should explore comparative studies between Ebian Yi wedding songs and other Chinese folk traditions to understand cross-ethnic variations in music literacy and transmission. Additionally, longitudinal studies on the impact of school-based folk music education programs would provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of integrating traditional music into formal curricula. Investigating the role of social media and digital platforms in revitalizing folk music could also offer new perspectives on using technology to enhance traditional music engagement among younger audiences.

REFERENCES

- Chan, C. S. C. (2018). Sustainability of indigenous folk tales, music and cultural heritage through innovation. *Journal of Cultural Heritage Management and Sustainable Development*, 8(3), 342-361. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JCHMSD-06-2017-0044>
- Erjian, M., & Chuangprakhon, S. (2023). Transmission of yugu folk song knowledge in Sunan County, Gansu Province, China. *International Education Studies*, 16(3), 43-50. <https://doi.org/10.5539/ies.v16n3p43>
- Gong, Y., Jirajarupat, P., & Zhang, Y. (2024). Music Form and Performance Techniques of Bayu Folk Songs. *International Journal of Education and Literacy Studies*, 12(3), 50-57. <https://doi.org/10.7575/aiac.ijels.v.12n.3p.50>
- Greene, V. (2023). *A passion for polka: Old-time ethnic music in America*. Univ of California Press. <https://doi.org/10.2307/jj.8441766>
- Hiswara, A., Aziz, A. M., & Pujowati, Y. (2023). Cultural Preservation in a Globalized World: Strategies for Sustaining Heritage. *West Science Social and Humanities Studies*, 1(03), 98-106. <https://doi.org/10.58812/wssh.v1i03.250>
- Ho, A. G. (2023). Visual Interpretations of Eastern and Western Wedding Invitation Designs. In *Conjugal Relationships in Chinese Culture: Sino-Western Discourses and Aesthetics on Marriage* (pp. 119-146). Singapore: Springer Nature Singapore. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-19-9841-6_7
- Ho, W. C. (2018). *Culture, music education, and the Chinese dream in Mainland China (Vol. 7)*. Singapore: Springer. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-10-7533-9>
- Howard, K. (2018). The emergence of children's multicultural sensitivity: An elementary school music culture

- project. *Journal of Research in Music Education*, 66(3), 261-277. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022429418784594>
- Howard, K. (2022). Musical instruments as tangible cultural heritage and as/for intangible cultural heritage. *International Journal of Cultural Property*, 29(1), 23-44. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0940739121000436>
- Jian, S., Chuangprakhon, S., & Santaveesuk, P. (2024). Dongjing Chinese Folk Music in Enhancing Musical Literacy and Education. *International Journal of Education and Literacy Studies*, 12(4), 151-158. <https://doi.org/10.7575/aiac.ijels.v.12n.4p.151>
- Jiayang Li, D. F. A., & Su, Y. (2024). Exploring the Significance of Traditional Music in Safeguarding and Transmitting Intangible Cultural Heritage: A Case Study of the Yunnan Bai Ethnic Group. *Cultura: International Journal of Philosophy of Culture and Axiology*, 21(3), 115-144.
- Jirajarapat, P., & Yinghua, Z. (2023). The Transmission of Guqin Musical Instrument Knowledge Literacy and its Reflection Study in Guizhou Province, China. *International Journal of Education and Literacy Studies*, 11(2), 22-29. <https://doi.org/10.7575/aiac.ijels.v.11n.2p.22>
- Luo, D., Li, S., Jia, F., Ku, D., & Wang, T. (November, 2020). Study on Benign Utilization of the Resources of Ethnic Law in China. In *2020 International Conference on Management, Economy and Law (ICMEL 2020)* (pp. 91-97). Atlantis Press. <https://doi.org/10.2991/aebmr.k.201111.017>
- Mohajan, H. K. (2018). Qualitative research methodology in social sciences and related subjects. *Journal of economic development, environment and people*, 7(1), 23-48. <https://doi.org/10.26458/jedep.v7i1.571>
- Norton, B., & Matsumoto, N. (Eds.). (2018). *Music as heritage: Historical and ethnographic perspectives*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315393865>
- Prest, A., & Goble, J. S. (2021). Language, music, and revitalizing Indigeneity: Effecting cultural restoration and ecological balance via music education. *Philosophy of Music Education Review*, 29(1), 24-46. <https://doi.org/10.2979/philmusieducrevi.29.1.03>
- Shun, W., & Boonsrianun, P. (2023). Guidelines for Promoting Literacy Transmission and Education of Rongshui Han Folk Songs in Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, China. *International Journal of Education and Literacy Studies*, 11(4), 122-130. <https://doi.org/10.7575/aiac.ijels.v.11n.4p.122>
- Song, L. L. (2024). Music Characteristics and Regional Differences in (SHE) Ethnic Minority Folk Songs: A Comparative Analysis of Ningde and Eastern Fujian Regions. *Journal of Ecohumanism*, 3(6), 1468-1478. <https://doi.org/10.62754/joe.v3i6.4112>
- Tang, J., & Sornyai, P. (2023). The cultural treasures of Baima Tibetan folk songs in Gansu Province, China, as a resource for literacy education in Chinese music History. *International Journal of Education and Literacy Studies*, 11(3), 234-243. <https://doi.org/10.7575/aiac.ijels.v.11n.3p.234>
- Tang, K. (2021). Singing a Chinese nation: Heritage preservation, the yuanshengtai movement, and new trends in Chinese folk music in the twenty-first century. *Ethnomusicology*, 65(1), 1-31. <https://doi.org/10.5406/ethnomusicology.65.1.0001>
- Tian, Y., & Woramitmaitee, N. (2023). An Investigation of Yi Folk Song Knowledge and Development in Guizhou, China. *Journal of Educational Issues*, 9(1), 161-173. <https://doi.org/10.5296/jei.v9i1.20663>
- Tracy, S. J. (2024). *Qualitative research methods: Collecting evidence, crafting analysis, communicating impact*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Wang, W., Boonsrianan, P., & Chuangprakhon, S. (2025). Music Literacy in the Preservation of Inner Mongolian Wedding Folk Songs. *International Journal of Education and Literacy Studies*, 13(1), 104-111. <https://doi.org/10.7575/aiac.ijels.v.13n.1p.104>
- Wang, X. (2023). The Application of Liangshan Yi Folk Song Elements in Popular Songwriting. *Art and Performance Letters*, 4(3), 1-5. <https://doi.org/10.23977/artpl.2023.040301>
- Wang, Y., & Thotham, A. (2024). Literacy transmission of Chinese folk songs in Southern Shaanxi. *International Journal of Education and Literacy Studies*, 12(3), 143-149. <https://doi.org/10.7575/aiac.ijels.v.12n.3p.143>
- Wu, Y., & Chuangprakhon, S. (2024). Preservation and Transmission Guidelines of Salar Vocal Folk Music. *International Journal of Education and Literacy Studies*, 12(1), 186-192. <https://doi.org/10.7575/aiac.ijels.v.12n.1p.186>
- Wu, Y., & Xu, Z. (2023). Six Rites of Allied Harmony: Changes in Ancient Chinese Wedding Ceremonies under the Influence of Confucianism. *Religions*, 14(12), 1528. <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel14121528>
- Yi, L., & Sondhiratna, T. (2024). The Transmission of Qiang Music at Aba Autonomous Prefecture in the People's Republic of China. *Journal of Modern Learning Development*, 9(6), 512-523.
- Yu, Z., & Leung, B. W. (2019). Music teachers and their implementation of the new Music Curriculum Standards in China. *International Journal of Music Education*, 37(2), 178-197. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0255761418820647>
- Zeng, X. (2024). A Study on Yunnan Folk Music Composers: Taking Xiaogeng Liu, Yong Chen, and Li Wan as Examples. *Educational Innovation Research*, 2(2), 1-8.
- Zhang, Q., & Negus, K. (2020). East Asian pop music idol production and the emergence of data fandom in China. *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, 23(4), 493-511. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1367877920904064>
- Zhang, S., & Wu, C. (2023). Revitalizing endangered traditions: Innovative approaches to safeguarding Yunnan's ethnic minority music as intangible cultural heritage. *Herança*, 6(1), 101-128. <https://doi.org/10.52152/heranca.v6i1.787>